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EXAMINER

MA, JOHNNY

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Arguments

1. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1, 3-5, 7-8, 11-18, 20-22, 24-25, 28-35, 37-39, and 41-51 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

In regard to Applicant's argument that "Graves fails to teach, suggest, or even mention 'discrete.' Graves fails to teach, suggest or even mention 'incremental.'" The examiner respectfully disagrees. The Graves et al. reference teaches "for each feature shown in the left column of FIG. 5, the viewer adjust the corresponding horizontal bar graph to the rating appropriate for the program just watched. For example, in FIG. 5, the user has adjusted the overall grade to a rating of eight, the story appeal to a rating of seven, the action level to a rating of nine, and so forth" (Graves 6:65-7:4). Thus the Graves et al. reference clearly teaches that the values are discrete (ratings of "1, 2, 3, ... 10") and incremental (ratings scale with an increment of 1). Furthermore, as noted below, the Herrington et al. reference teaches "[t]he configuration display screen 138 may contain options for providing the user with an opportunity to assign various importance levels to the on-screen program attributes. The option may provide the user with an opportunity to assign different weights/importance levels such as required, desired, ignored, or excluded to the program attributes" (Herrington [0064]). However, the Herrington et al. reference does not specifically disclose "enabling a user to assign discrete incremental weight to at least one of said plurality of first search elements, the discrete incremental weight being a discrete value." As discussed above, the Graves et al. fills this gap.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 1, 3-5, 7-8, 11-14, 16, 18, 20-22, 24-25, 28-31, 33, 35, 37-39, 41-43, 45-48, and 50 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Herrington et al. (US 2004/0221310 A1 of record) in further view of Graves et al. (US 5,410,344 of record).

As to claim 1, note the Herrington et al. reference that discloses an electronic program guide with a related-program search feature. The claimed “displaying a schedule for a first program, from program data” is met by “program guide information...includes television program listings data such as program times, channels, titles, descriptions, program type, genre, actors, etc.” (para. 0038) and “[t]elevision program listings, advertisements, programming information, and other information may be displayed on television 68” (para. 0045). The claimed “extracting a selected program’s title from said schedule” is met by “[t]he program attribute information may be provided with the program listings data” (Herrington [0071]) wherein the attribute information is extracted from program listings data for use and program attribute information includes title as illustrated in Figure 7A (see “Star Trek: The Next Gen.; Star Trek...”). The claimed “displaying a plurality of first search elements derived from the description of the first program and a selected program’s title” is met by “[a] list of attributes for the given program may be displayed for the user” (para. 0069) wherein attributes include those derived from the description of the first program as illustrated in Figure 8A (e.g. Broncos,

Cowboys, Football Game) and a selected program's title (Herrington, see Figure 7A). The claimed "enabling a user to modify the selected title" is met by a user having the option to weight program attributes wherein a user may modify the title by excluding the full program title while maintaining a partial title for a search (Herrington, see Figure 7A). The claimed "selecting at least one of the plurality of first search elements" is met by the selection of search elements wherein "the program guide may then locate program listings based on the user-configured search parameters" (para. 0063). Note the Herrington et al. reference teaches "[t]he configuration display screen 138 may contain options for providing the user with an opportunity to assign various importance levels to the on-screen program attributes. The option may provide the user with an opportunity to assign different [discrete / individually distinct] importance levels such as required, desired, ignored, or excluded to the program attributes" (Herrington [0064]). However, the Herrington et al. reference does not specifically disclose "enabling a user to assign discrete incremental weight to at least one of said plurality of first search elements, the discrete incremental weight being a discrete value." Now note the Graves et al. reference that teaches rating search elements wherein the rating comprises discrete incremental weights as illustrated in Figure 5 (Graves). Therefore the examiner submits that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the Herrington et al. importance levels with the Graves et al. importance levels comprising discrete incremental weights for the purpose of providing a user a method to define the weight of importance levels with a greater degree of accuracy and thus provide greater accuracy for searching. The claimed "[the discrete incremental weight being a discrete value] specified via an input device" is met by the Herrington et al. and Graves et al. combination as discussed above wherein system is

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controlled by user input interface “such as a wireless keyboard, mouse, trackball, dedicated set of buttons, touch screen display remote, etc...Remote controls” (para. 0045). The claimed “enabling a user to assign discrete incremental weight to at least one of said plurality of first search elements” is met by “[t]he configuration display screen 138 may contain options for providing the user with an opportunity to assign various importance levels to the on-screen program attributes. The option may provide the user with an opportunity to assign different [discrete / individually distinct] importance levels such as required, desired, ignored, or excluded to the program attributes” (Herrington [0064]). The claimed “finding at least one of a plurality of second programs similar to the first program” is met by “...the program guide may display a display screen including on-screen listings for programs that are related to the given program based on the user-configured search parameters” (para. 63). The claimed “the found program having at least one of a plurality of second search elements derived from the description of the second program that matches the selected search element” is met by program guide system locating related programs based on selected program attributes (para. 0065). The claimed “displaying the found programs most similar to the first program before the found programs least similar to the first program” is met by “[t]he list may have been sorted based on attributes that were used by the program guide to locate the displayed program listings...For example...based on how many attributes matched” (para. 0062). The claimed “wherein the found programs most similar to the first program have the greatest number of search element matches” is met by the disclosed sort by number of attributes matched further evidenced by displaying the more closely matched programs at the top of the list (para. 0066).

As to claim 3, the claimed “displaying a plurality of search parameters derived from the schedule of the first program” is met by “[a] list of attributes for the given program may be displayed for the user” (para. 0069) wherein attributes include those derived from the description of the first program as illustrated in Figure 8A (e.g. Broncos, Cowboys, Football Game). The claimed “selecting at least one of the plurality of search parameters” is met by the selection of search elements wherein “the program guide may then locate program listings based on the user-configured search parameters” (para. 0063). The claimed “displaying the found programs most within the search parameters before the found programs least within the search parameters” is met by the disclosed sort by number of attributes matched further evidenced by displaying the more closely matched programs at the top of the list (para. 0066).

As to claim 4, the claimed “wherein the found programs most similar to the first program have the greatest number of search element matches having the greatest weight” is met by “[d]isplay screen 140 may include a list of programs that are related to the given program based on the search parameters of configuration display screen 138 of Fig. 7a.” wherein programs most closely matching the user-configured search parameters are displayed at the top of the list (para. 0066).

As to claim 5, the claimed “specifying a parameter weight associated with a selected search parameter” is met by user may assign different important levels for different program attributes (para. 0064) also see Figure 7a. The claimed “wherein the found programs most within the search parameters are the found programs most within the search parameters having the greatest weight” is met by “[d]isplay screen 140 may include a list of programs that are related to the given program based on the search parameters of configuration display screen 138

of Fig. 7a.” wherein programs most closely matching the user-configured search parameters are displayed at the top of the list (para. 0066).

As to claim 7, the claimed “wherein the discrete value is selected from a range of values displayed as a continuum” is met by the Herrington et al. and Graves et al. combination as discussed in the rejection of claim 1 wherein the Graves et al. reference discloses a viewer may adjust ratings for program attributes using a horizontal bar graph (Graves 6:63-68; 7:1-4) also see Figure 5.

As to claim 8, the claimed “wherein the range of values displayed as a continuum is a slider graphic” is met by the horizontal bar graph as discussed in the rejection of claim 7.

As to claim 11, the claimed “wherein the parameter weight is a second discrete value specified via an input device” is met by “different importance levels such as required, desired, ignored, or excluded” (para. 0064) wherein system is controlled by user input interface “such as a wireless keyboard, mouse, trackball, dedicated set of buttons, touch screen display remote, etc...Remote controls” (para. 0045). Note that importance levels may be assigned to a plurality of program attributes (para. 0064).

As to claims 12 and 13, please see rejections of claims 7 and 8 respectively noting the importance levels may be assigned to a plurality of program attributes (para. 0064).

As to claim 14, the claimed “wherein the second discrete value is selected using a keypad” is met by “[e]ach set-top box 62, videocassette recorder 66, and television 68 can be controlled by one or more remote controls 70 or any other suitable user input interface...Remote controls, such as remote control 70, have various buttons [keypad] that can be pressed by the user such as arrow keys (e.g., for directing on-screen movement of a highlight region, for

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directing scrolling functions, etc.)...channel number keys...etc.” (para. 0045) wherein “[a] list of attributes for the given programs (such as the attribute list of display screen 300 of FIG. 7c) may be displayed for the user (e.g., by the program guide or other interactive application running on the system). A moveable highlight region such as highlight region 302 or other such indicator may be used to provide the user with an opportunity to select attributes of interest to be used in searching for related programs” (para. 0069) and “...the user may select one or more attributes (e.g., by pressing remote control OK button or otherwise selecting desired attributes) (para. 70). Note that moveable highlight region is directed by remote control, for example by use of the arrow keys (para. 0045) and that importance levels may be assigned to a plurality of program attributes (para. 0064).

As to claim 16, the claimed “wherein the plurality of search elements is selected from the group consisting of a program title, an actor, a director, and a genre” is met by identifying related programming “...based on criteria, such as whether a program is related in attribute to the particular program, whether a program is a sequel or prequel of the particular program, whether a program is in the same program series as the particular program [title], whether a program is a series that is related to the particular program, whether a program is related the user-selected program in content or subject matter, whether a program has the same actor(s), director, category, theme, or production years as the user-selected program, etc” (para. 0051).

As to claims 18 and 20-22, please see rejections of claims 1 and 3-5 respectively wherein the Herrington et al. system is embodied in a set-top box (para. 0043) containing a processor to handle tasks associated with implementing an application on the set-top box that assists the user in searching for programs (para. 0050).

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As to claims 24-25 and 29-30, please see rejections of claims 7-8 and 12-13 respectively.

As to claim 28, please see rejection of claim 11.

As to claim 31, please see rejection of claim 14.

As to claim 33, please see rejection of claims 16.

As to claims 35 and 37-39, please see rejections of claims 1 and 3-5 respectively wherein the Herrington et al. system is embodied in a set-top box implementing an application that assists the user in searching for programs (e.g., a stand-alone application) (para. 0050).

As to claims 41-42 please see rejections of claims 7-8 respectively.

As to claims 46-47, please see rejections of claims 12-13 respectively.

As to claim 43, please see rejection of claim 14.

As to claim 45, please see rejection of claim 11.

As to claim 48, please see rejection of claim 14.

As to claim 50, please see rejection of claims 16.

4. Claims 15, 32, 44, and 49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Herrington et al. (US 2004/0221310 A1 of record) in further view of Graves et al. (US 5,410,344 of record) and Allport (US 6,567,984 B1 of record).

As to claim 15, the claimed “wherein the second discrete value is selected using a slider mechanism on a remote control device.” Note the Herrington et al. reference discloses using a remote control, of various embodiments to control a program guide system (Herrington [0045]). Furthermore, the Herrington et al. and Graves et al. combination discloses weighting program attributes using a horizontal bar graph. However, the Herrington et al. and Graves et al. combination are silent as to a remote control with a slider mechanism. Now note the Allport

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reference that discloses a remote controller wherein “[t]he physical actuating buttons may include push buttons...switches...sliders, or other mechanisms...” wherein the functions of the buttons may vary (Allport 6:23-30). The Allport reference also discloses that, among other functions, the sliders could be used to change channels on a TV (Allport 7:8-11). Therefore, the examiner submits that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the Herrington et al. and Graves et al. remote controlled weighting of program attributes via a horizontal bar graph with the Allport slider mechanism for the purpose of providing and intuitive and easier means to adjust the program attribute bars wherein the weights could be easily adjusted by using a slider on the remote control resulting in adjustment of the displayed horizontal bar graph. Note that importance levels may be assigned to a plurality of program attributes (para. 0064)

As to claims 32, please see rejection of claim 15.

As to claims 44 and 49, please see rejections of claim 15.

5. Claims 17, 34, and 51 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Herrington et al. (US 2004/0221310 of record) in further view of Graves et al. (US 5,410,344 of record) and Bates et al. (US 6,681,396 of record).

As to claim 17, the claimed “wherein the plurality of search elements is selected from the group consisting of a show time and a channel.” Note, the Herrington et al. reference discloses search attributes including channel, year produced or any other suitable program attributes (Herrington [0071]). However, the Herrington et al. reference is silent as to a show time search element. Now note the Bates et al. reference that discloses a method of searching for similar programming wherein “it may be desirable to limit the search to the same date, or to search

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forward on future dates to locate later showings of the television program” (Bates et al. 6:53-59).

Therefore, the examiner submits that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention is made to modify the Herrington et al. related programming search with the Bates et al. show time search element for the purpose of providing an user an increased ability to locate related programming wherein a user may specify a time period in which he wishes related programming to be identified.

As to claim 34, please see rejection of claim 17.

As to claim 51, please see rejection of claim 17.

Conclusion


Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Johnny Ma whose telephone number is (571) 272-7351. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:00 am - 5:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner’s supervisor, Chris Kelley can be reached on (571) 272-7331. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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